

Drug death probes reopened

The Cook County Medical Examiner's office has reopened investigations into three cocaine-related deaths that occurred this fall after cyanide also was found in the victims' systems.

One of the overdose victims, convicted drug dealer Mark A. Husted, 32, died Sept. 14 at the home of a friend in Des Plaines, two months before he was to face additional drug charges. His father, Carpentersville Village Attorney Richard Husted, apparently urged the re-investigation into the death because of a feeling that his son may have been murdered.

The original cause of death for Husted was listed as a massive overdose of cocaine. But the re-examination showed that Husted's body tissues contained a lethal level of cyanide.

Seven Chicago-area people died between Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 after unknowingly taking cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules.

Dr. Michael I. Schaffer, chief toxicologist in the medical examiner's office, said officials were checking the deaths of Husted, Galen Parriott, 30, of Skokie, and Marie Louise Watkins, 21, of Chicago, "because of the close proximity (in time) to the cyanide deaths."

Toxicology reports showed each of the three had ingested lethal doses of cyanide, Schaffer said.

Authorities found 354 micrograms of cyanide in Husted's system, and officials said 3 to 5 micrograms of cyanide is enough to kill an adult. As a result of

Tylenol maker files suit to recover costs of recall

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (UPI) — The maker of Tylenol has filed a \$117 million lawsuit against nine insurance companies to recover part of the cost of recalling all Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules throughout the nation, a company spokesman said Wednesday.

McNeilab Inc., a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, claimed some of the costs of the massive \$100 million recall were covered by product liability and all-risk insurance policies.

Johnson & Johnson withdrew all its Tylenol capsules from the market in October after seven Chicago-area residents were fatally poisoned by Tylenol capsules filled with cyanide.

The company recently began marketing the product again, in triple-sealed containers.

Robert Kniffen, a spokesman for Johnson & Johnson, said the suit was originally filed in November, and the nine companies were notified then.

"We have been awaiting a response since," he said. "When one was not forthcoming, it was decided to serve them with a suit, which just happened this week."

McNeilab, a holding company for McNeil Consumer Products Co., which makes Tylenol, asked the court to uphold its claim for \$67.4 million against eight carriers with whom the company had product liability insurance.

In addition, it said it sought \$50 million for business interruption and loss of profits under an "all-risk" policy underwritten by Affiliated FM Insurance Co.

that test, toxicologists are testing all suspected victims of cocaine overdoses for cyanide.

"We are continuing these investigations because we are finding now that cyanide is an easy poison to obtain, and we don't want to overlook any possible cyanide poisoning case," said Medical

Examiner Robert Stein. A detective on the task force looking into the Tylenol murders said it would be valuable to know if the cyanide reported to have caused these three deaths was the same type that killed the Tylenol victims, but he said it is impossible to conduct such a test.

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